

**BENEFIT PROGRAMS PROVIDED BY RETAIL ELECTRIC
PROVIDERS AND CERTIFICATED TELECOMMUNICATIONS
UTILITIES FOR LOW-INCOME CUSTOMERS**

CHAPTER 48

S.B. No. 1976

AN ACT

relating to benefit programs provided by retail electric providers and certificated telecommunications utilities for low-income customers.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Texas:

SECTION 1. Section 17.007, Utilities Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 17.007. ~~IDENTIFICATION [ELIGIBILITY] PROCESS FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE BENEFITS [DISCOUNTS]~~. (a) *The Health and Human Services Commission, on request of the commission, shall assist in developing an automatic process for identifying low-income customers to retail electric providers and certificated telecommunications utilities to enable those providers and utilities to offer customer service, discounts, bill payment assistance, or other methods of assistance [The commission by rule shall provide for an integrated eligibility process for customer service discounts, including discounts under Sections 39.903 and 55.015].*

(b) *The commission and the Health and Human Services Commission shall continue the memorandum of understanding entered into by those agencies in effect on January 1, 2017, that establishes the respective duties of those agencies in relation to the automatic process, and may amend the memorandum of understanding as necessary to achieve the goals of this section.*

(c) *The commission may not require a retail electric provider or a certificated telecommunications utility to offer customer service, discounts, bill payment assistance, targeted bill messaging, or other benefits for which the provider or utility is not reimbursed.*

(d) *The commission may not submit a request to the Health and Human Services Commission to provide for a process to identify low-income electric customers for a fiscal year unless:*

(1) *the commission receives a request from one or more retail electric providers not later than July 31 of the previous fiscal year for a list of low-income electric customers to be developed; and*

(2) *each retail electric provider that submits a request to the commission under Subdivision (1) agrees to reimburse the commission for the cost of development of the list on terms agreed to by the commission and the provider.*

SECTION 2. Section 55.015(b), Utilities Code, is amended to read as follows:

(b) *The commission shall adopt rules providing for automatic enrollment to receive lifeline service for eligible consumers. The Health and Human Services Commission [Texas Department of Human Services], on request of the commission, shall assist in the adoption and implementation of those rules. The commission and the Health and Human Services Commission [Texas Department of Human Services] shall enter into a memorandum of understanding establishing the respective duties of those agencies [the commission and department] in relation to the automatic enrollment.*

SECTION 3. Section 56.021, Utilities Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 56.021. **UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND ESTABLISHED.** The commission shall adopt and enforce rules requiring local exchange companies to establish a universal service fund to:

(1) *assist telecommunications providers in providing basic local telecommunications service at reasonable rates in high cost rural areas under two plans:*

(A) *the Texas High Cost Universal Service Plan (16 T.A.C. Section 26.403); and*

(B) *the Small and Rural Incumbent Local Exchange Company Universal Service Plan (16 T.A.C. Section 26.404);*

- (2) reimburse the telecommunications carrier that provides the statewide telecommunications relay access service under Subchapter D;
- (3) finance the specialized telecommunications assistance program established under Subchapter E;
- (4) reimburse the department and the commission for costs incurred in implementing this chapter and Chapter 57;
- (5) reimburse a telecommunications carrier providing lifeline service as provided by 47 C.F.R. Part 54, Subpart E, as amended;
- (6) finance the implementation and administration of *the identification process under [an integrated eligibility process created under] Section 17.007 for [customer service discounts relating to] telecommunications services[, including outreach expenses the commission determines are reasonable and necessary]*;
- (7) reimburse a designated provider under Subchapter F;
- (8) reimburse a successor utility under Subchapter G; and
- (9) finance the program established under Subchapter H.

SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2017.

Passed the Senate on April 26, 2017: Yeas 31, Nays 0; passed the House on May 6, 2017: Yeas 132, Nays 9, one present not voting.

Approved May 19, 2017.

Effective September 1, 2017.

REQUIREMENT THAT THE TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION PROVIDE CERTAIN EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

CHAPTER 49

S.B. No. 2105

AN ACT

relating to the requirement that the Texas Workforce Commission provide certain employment information for secondary school students.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Texas:

SECTION 1. Section 302.014(a), Labor Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a) The commission shall provide the Texas Education Agency with information at least each quarter, *disaggregated by county or other appropriate region*, regarding:

- (1) current and projected employment opportunities in this state;
- (2) *career and technical education partnership opportunities with business and industry; and*
- (3) *professional development opportunities for teachers and learning opportunities for students through industry mentorships, internships, summer programs, after-school programs, and career-based student leadership opportunities*~~[, disaggregated by county or other appropriate region]~~.

SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2017.

Passed the Senate on April 26, 2017: Yeas 31, Nays 0; passed the House on May 6, 2017: Yeas 141, Nays 4, one present not voting.

Approved May 19, 2017.

Effective September 1, 2017.